

POPISH OBJECTIONS
AGAINST
PROTESTANTS
BRIEFLY ANSWER'D,

In some Curfory
REMARKS ON a PAMPHLET;
INTITLED,
A ROMAN CATHOLICK'S
Reasons why he cannot conform to
the PROTESTANT RELIGION.

OCCASION'D
By some POPISH PROSELYTES lately
made in the Parish and Neighbourhood of
HOLY-WELL.

To which is added,
A LETTER to a PROSE-
LYTE of the Church of ROME,
touching the Danger of living in
that COMMUNION; first publish'd
in the Year 1731. K

By G. R. JONES, M. A.
Rector of DENBIGH.

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ERRATA.

IN the Notes, Page 8, for *Paciti's* read *Pagitt's*. P. 10, l. 23, read *than those of some particular Men*. P. 11, l. 18, the Sentence *and accordingly, &c.* is misplaced, and should have followed the Word *Church*, l. 22. P. 13, l. 23, for *beneficial* read *beneficed*.





POPISH OBJECTIONS
AGAINST
PROTESTANTS
BRIEFLY ANSWER'D, &c.



IT is surprizing to consider the strange Arts, and horrid Misrepresentations made use of by Popish Emissaries to prejudice Men against the Protestant Religion in general, and more particularly, as it is profess'd by the Church of *England*, and by Law establish'd in this Realm, (though no other than Primitive Christianity) in order to seduce and gain them over to their own Communion; whereof the Pamphlet in hand is a notorious Instance, as will (I conceive) in some Measure appear from the following Remarks upon the several Heads or Articles of Complaint therein contain'd; though they are generally so trifling and inconsiderable, as not to deserve any Animadversions at all; and some of them such palpable Misrepresentations,

that they can hardly escape the Observation of any Person of common Capacity ; but this must be referr'd to the Judgment of the impartial Readers upon a due Perusal of what is here offer'd to support this Charge.

The first Reason assign'd by this Author against the Protestant Religion, is its being a New Religion set up by *Martin Luther* in the 16th Century, and therefore that ours cannot be the true Church ; since this confessedly had its Beginning from Christ, and is to continue for ever.

To which I reply, that as we have no Dispute with the Papists about the moral or practical Part of our Religion, so they agree with us in all the necessary Articles of our Faith, as delivered in the Scriptures, and summarily contained in the antient Creeds ; and only differ in the additional Articles enjoin'd by Pope *Pius* in the Council of *Trent*, which though therein required to be believed under Pain of Damnation, yet as has been often observed, their own Guides have sometimes own'd, that it's indifferent whether they are believed or no.

Now these may be justly called new Articles of Faith, because they were never added to the Creed, till about a Hundred and Seventy Years ago, nor wholly decreed as Articles of Faith even in the Church of *Rome*, till that time ; nor ever since universally received as such by the Papists themselves to this very Day ; which alone, is a sufficient Reason to justify our rejecting of them.

Whereas ours can by no Means deserve that Title, because as they are undeniably founded on the Holy Scriptures, so they were avowedly profess'd by the Catholick Church in all Ages:

Ages : And therefore so far is the Protestant Religion, as it is professed in the Church of *England*, from being a new Religion, that it is as old as Christianity itself, and the very same that Christ and his Apostles delivered in the Gospel, though the Name Protestant could not be apply'd to it, till it was occasioned by our protesting against these Innovations of the Church of *Rome*.

And since our protesting Articles cannot possibly be of any older Date than this Occasion of them, a prior Account of them cannot, without the greatest Absurdity, be demanded of us : * Nor were they ever designed as necessary or fundamental Articles of our Faith, but only as inferior Truths or Propositions to be subscribed by the Clergy, in order to Peace and Unity ; otherwise our Laity would have been equally obliged to declare themselves upon these Points, which every Body knows they are not required to do.

And as these Innovations in Points of Faith, with that heavy Yoke of useless and some of them sinful Rites and Observances enjoin'd by your Church, are all that were laid aside by ours at the Reformation ; it is plain, no essential Change could be thereby possibly wrought in it, but only an accidental one, like that of a leprous Person cured of his Leprosy, or of a sick Person restored to his Health : And therefore how can this Author in Reason suppose that our Church was not in Being before the Reformation, or its being then founded by apostate Friars or wicked Men ; since the very Reformation itself (whose Necessity has been confessed by several eminent Persons of
A 3 your

* See *Bp. Bull's Vind, of the Ch. of Eng. p. 180.*

your own Communion) implies the contrary ; for how can any thing be reformed that is not in Being ; and it is highly probable, * as several learned Men have proved, that the *British* Church had a Being even before the Church of *Rome* itself, and was founded by *St. Paul*, or some other Apostolical Persons. But suppose the Case was quite otherwise (as avowedly that of the *English* was) yet would this be no Argument against its being a true Church ; for such confessedly other Churches are, that were not in Being till some Ages after, and yet may be justly said to derive their Original from Christ, as they were converted by Persons that acted by his Authority and Commission ; and therefore it is evident, the Author here wilfully confounds the Case, and manifestly imposes upon the Reader by not distinguishing between a particular and the universal Church ; for it is to the latter of these that the Promise of Perpetuity only belongs ; as also its having its Beginning from Christ ; if he means by it, its commencing from the Time that Christ lived upon Earth, which every Body knows, was no more the Case of the Church of *Rome*, than it was of our own Church, because neither of them was then in Being.

The second Reason advanced by this Author against the Protestant Religion is taken from the pretended Infallibility of Christ's Church, which as he asserts, the whole Scripture assures us of, and consequently that there could be no room for a Reformation of it : Here I observe, he takes for granted, that the Church of *Rome* is the whole or *Catholic* Church, which can never be allow'd, as long as there is
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* See *Bp. Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. and Usher's Primordia.*

any Difference between the Whole and a Part; and accordingly the numerous Scripture Promises cited by him, if at all to the Purpose, (as I am persuaded several of them are not) relate to the whole Church, and not to the Church of *Rome*, or any other particular Part of it; and denote not its Infallibility but its Perpetuity; not a total Exemption from Errors, but that it should not utterly be destroyed, so as to cease to be a Church, as we know in Fact several particular Churches have been; and to confirm this Doctrine, as we have notwithstanding these Promises of Divine Assistance, sundry flagrant Instances of Errors in the main Body of the Jewish Church with respect to their Idolatries, and their crucifying the Son of God as a Malefactor; so we have the like Instances of Idolatrous and superstitious Doctrines and Practices in ^{the} your Church with respect to her Religious Use of Images, in Vocation of Saints, Worship of the Host, &c. which, as they are clearly prohibited in Holy Writ, must of Consequence be a manifest Confutation of her pretended Infallibility; and since no Arguments can be admitted against plain and notorious Facts; and since all that could be ever offered from Scripture upon this Head has been clearly and satisfactorily considered and confuted by Mr. *Chillingworth*, our *London* Divines, &c. this supersedes my making any further Remarks upon the Scripture Passages cited by this Author, nor indeed is a particular Examination of them consistent with my intended Brevity in these Remarks, though otherwise an Attempt very feasible, because already done to my Hands.

To

* See Bp. *Stillingfleet* of the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*.

To the third and fourth Pretence advanced by this Author against the Protestant Religion, viz. that as *Luther* laid the first Foundation of it, so he and the first Protestants disclaimed the Authority and Doctrine of all Churches, when they began to set up their new Religion: I answer, that our Religion is not founded upon the Credit or Authority of these first Reformers, who as they were frail and fallible Men, must of course be liable to Errors and Mistakes; but upon the reveal'd Will of God: And accordingly that they did not pretend to set up a new Religion, but to reform the old, according to this unerring Rule, by only laying aside the Corruptions that had crept into it, but nothing appertaining to its Being or Constitution: Nor can it be justly said, that all Churches in the World were then in Communion with the Church of *Rome*, * since the contrary is notorious with Respect to the *Greek* † *Habassin*, and other Churches differing from her in several of those particular Points of her Religion denied by Protestants, and agreeing with us, as indeed the Papists themselves do, in all the fundamental Articles of our Faith; yet had this been the Truth of the Case, as it is an undoubted Maxim, that God is to be obeyed rather than Men; it clearly follows, that they could justify disclaiming the Authority of all these Churches, when they enjoin'd any Doctrines or Practices in Opposition to his reveal'd Will, § as is manifestly the Case of the Church of *Rome*; and therefore it is unconceivable to me, how the Belief of the Catholick Church, and Communion of Saints, can be in any

* See *Brerewood's Enquiries*. † See *Mr. Pacitt's Christianography*. § See the *Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome truly represented*.

any wise inconsistent with this Conduct, unless the Church of *Rome* was from the first Rise of Christianity in all Ages the whole or Universal Church, and her Communion the only true and lawful Communion, which is a Supposition as notoriously false as it is uncharitable. There being a Church at *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, &c. several Years before the Church of *Rome* had a Being.

To the fifth Reflection of this Author, importing that the Protestant Churches have not the Marks of the true Church, *viz.* its being one, Holy, Catholick and Apostolical; I answer, that these are Notes of the whole or universal Church, and therefore some of them not properly applicable to the Church of *Rome*, or any other particular Church of what Denomination soever; none of which can be said to be the One and Catholick Church; but if applied to the Religion or Profession of Christianity, I make no Doubt of it, but ours has as good a Claim to them as any in the World, and beyond Dispute on several Accounts an incomparably better than the Church of *Rome* can pretend to. For, *First*, As to our Unity in Religion it appears from our Agreement in all the necessary Articles of the Christian Faith, notwithstanding our different Opinions in other less important Points; as you have the like Sects and Divisions among yourselves; and as we find in History they have been in all Ages of the Church: And as Charity is an essential Requisite of Unity, in Evidence thereof we are taught in our Church to pronounce favourably on the final State of our fellow Christians, and by no Means to pass a damnatory Sentence against any of them.

Whereas

Whereas though your distinguishing Articles of Faith were never universally receiv'd even by the Members of your own Church to this very Day, as was before observed; yet all that deny any one Article of them are * damn'd and anathematiz'd by her; so that many Millions of Christians are thus sentenced that hold the primitive Faith contain'd in the *Nicene Creed*, which is the *Baptismal Creed* of all the *Eastern Churches*.

2dly, The Holiness of our Doctrine cannot be denied, because nothing is enjoin'd in our Church as necessary to be believed, or practis'd in order to Salvation, but what manifestly tends to promote Piety and Holiness, as appears from that excellent Summary of Religion our *Church Catechism*; and more fully from our incomparable Liturgy, which has been approv'd of even by your Popes, † who offer'd to confirm it: Whereas your Doctrines of Indulgence, Purgatory, Works of Supererogation, &c. are notoriously calculated to serve other Purposes; which is the only Case, wherein Religion can be charged with the personal Faults of its Professors: And accordingly the scandalous Doctrines and Lives of your Popes may with more Justice be objected to your Church, than those particular Men that profess'd it, are imputed to the Reformation.

Lastly, It is confessed on all Hands, that all Orthodox Christians are agreed in, and have in all Ages profess'd our necessary Articles of Faith, which are therefore truly Catholick and Apostolical: § Whereas this can never be made

* See the Bulla in Caena.
Annals of Queen Elizabeth.
Antiquities.

† See Mr. Cambden's
§ See Mr. Bingham's

made appear with respect to the additional Articles of your Church, though enjoin'd by her as equally necessary to Salvation.

To the sixth, seventh, and eighth Exceptions of this Author against the Protestant Religion, which relate to *Luther* and King *Henry* the 8th's immoral Conduct, and the Reformation's being violently and sacrilegiously carried on in King *Edward* the Sixth's Reign, and established in this Kingdom by an Act of Parliament in the first Year of Queen *Elizabeth*'s in Opposition (as is pretended) to the whole Body of the Clergy: I reply, 1st, That it is of no Weight with Respect to the Merit of the Cause, what *Luther* was as to his moral Conduct, since we do not owe our Reformation to him, and accordingly we find him vindicated by several learned Men; though it may be more than a Matter of reasonable Suspicion, that his Character has not been fairly represented by the Writers of your Church: However, suppose the Case had been otherwise, yet the Reformation could not be justly charged with his personal Slips or Miscarriages, since no Institution is chargeable with the bare personal Faults of its Professors; nor can a true Estimate of Religion be taken from the Instruments employ'd by divine Providence for the setting up, or propagating of it, since there was a *Judas* even amongst the first Preachers or Propagators of Christianity: And therefore our only proper Method of forming a right Judgment in this Case, is to inquire into the Nature and Tendency of it, and its Consonancy with God's reveal'd Will, which as it is confessedly the true Rule and Standard of Religion; so,

I dare

I dare say, there is none upon Earth more agreeable to it than our own.

2dly, As to King *Henry* the VIIIth (whom * several of your Popes have surpassed in Wickedness even by the Confession of your own Writers) we are in no wise concern'd to vindicate his Character, since it cannot be denied, but that in the main he both lived and died a Papist, as appears from his persecuting the Protestants, and the six bloody Articles which several of them suffer'd Death on the Account of in his Reign; and, by the by, it is to him the first Demolishment of the Monasteries was owing, and not the Protestants, though this Author would fain fix it on them. And so far was this Affair from being violently, &c. carried on in King *Edward's* Reign (as he insinuates) that it was manifestly transacted by the joint Concurrence of both the Civil and Ecclesiastical Powers, † as appear to any body that will consult the History of those Times: As to the Sacrileges then said to be committed by Protestants, if they are not in some Measure to be justified, or at least mitigated as to the Guilt of them by the notorious Abuses and Corruptions of religious Houses, that occasioned them; yet as they are at the most but the bare personal Faults of particular Men, without the least Countenance from any Doctrine of our Religion, doubtless it cannot be justly charged with them; whereas on the other Hand those committed by Papists, as also the horrid Villainies and Treacheries, Massacres and Murders, Rebellions and Outrages, which they were notoriously guilty of in several Countries, and

* See their Characters set forth by Platina, Baronius, &c. † See Dr. Burnet's History of the Reform. Vol. 2.

and at sundry Times, may not only be justly imputed to the wicked Actors of the bloody Tragedies, but also to their Church and Religion, because they acted therein in pursuance of their avowed Principles of deposing Kings and extirpating *Hereticks*.

3dly, As to our Religion's being established by an Act of Parliament in the First of *Queen Elizabeth's*, I need only observe, that its receiving the Sanction of the Civil Power, can be no better Argument against it, than it was against Christianity, that it was countenanced and supported by *Constantine*, when it had been persecuted by his Predecessors in the *Roman Empire*.

Lastly, Whereas this Author suggests, that the Reformation was then opposed by the whole Body of the Clergy, and cites *Dr. Heylin's History of the Reformation* for it; this Tract I have consulted, but can find nothing in't sufficient to support that Charge; however, suppose the Case was otherwise; it is obvious to observe that as all the beneficial Clergy were professed Papists, when *Queen Elizabeth* came to the Throne, it is no wonder the Reformation should be opposed by them; as in all Probability Popery would have been as unanimously opposed in her Sister's Reign, but for the Persecution then set on Foot, as it was in her Brother *Edward's*. But on the other Hand, it cannot be denied, that there were then several other eminent Clergymen of this Nation, * whose Names we have recorded in History, that were that very Year engaged in accomplishing this good Work; so that it could

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* See *Mr. Strype's Annals of Queen Eliz.* p. 82, &c.

not be the Performance of meer Laymen, as he notoriously misrepresents it, for all that the Parliament then did, was only giving it the Civil Sanction. Nor was this done by our Church in Opposition to any just Authority, but only in Vindication of its own just Right from the Usurpation of another, which it was not by Divine Right subject to, or dependent upon; for besides the Statutes of Proviso's and Premunires against Appeals to *Rome*, it has been often observed, that none of the Pope's Canons were here looked upon as binding or obligatory, till they were first received and allowed of by our Church, which (as * our Writers have proved) has before that Usurpation enjoyed the same antient Liberties and Independency with the Church of *Cyprus*, whose Case was determined in the third General or *Ephesine* Council: And accordingly the Popes of *Rome* cannot claim this Authority over our Church in Right of their Patriarchate, because *England* was not within the Precincts of it; much less on the Account of any Conversions from *Rome*, otherwise by Parity of Reason the Church of *Jerusalem* must be entitled to the same Authority over yours; besides that Christianity was here first planted by Missionaries from that Church, and not from *Rome*, as was before observed. Nor, *lastly*, Can they claim it as *St. Peter's* Successors, else the Bishops of *Antioch* must at least have an equal Title to it: Nor does it appear that *St. Peter* ever claim'd or pretended to that Supreme Power over the universal Church, which they would be thought to derive from him, but just
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* See Mr. Bingham's *Antiq.* Vol. 3. p. 378.

the reverse of it, as may be gathered from the Council of *Jerusalem*, wherein *St. James* presided, though *St. Peter* was there present; from his being employed as a Missionary from that Church to *Samaria*; from his being opposed and reprimanded by *St. Paul* for his Compliance with the *Jewish* Profelytes at *Antioch*; and his having the Charge of the Circumcision particularly committed to him, as that of the Uncircumcision was to *St. Paul* who cannot be said to act by a Deputation from him, since he expressly declares the contrary, *Gal. i. 12.* And accordingly this Pretence is directly opposite both to our Saviour's Command and his own express Doctrine, *Luke xxii. 26.*
1 Pet. v. 3.

To the ninth and tenth Plea urged by this Author against the Protestant Religion, relating to the comparatively greater Devotion, Zeal and Religion of Papists than is to be found among Protestants, their pretended Miracles, their Title of Catholics, and their communicating with *St. Peter's* Chair, the Antiquity and perpetual Visibility of their Church, and the Apostolical Succession and Mission of the Pastors, and Conversion of Infidels by the sole Ministry of their Missionaries: I reply, *First*, That I can take this as no other than a manifest Sign of Pharisaical Pride and Arrogance; for I make no doubt of it, whatever outward Appearance they may make of Religion, that we have as eminent Instances of sincere Piety and Devotion in Protestant Countries, as any the Church of *Rome*, at least in her present State, can boast of, and some of them vastly preferable to a great many of her reputed Saints, whereof their avow'd Doctrines and Practices,

tices, which are utterly inconsistent with true Piety and Religion, are an undeniable Evidence, though this Author has the Confidence to engross the whole Number of them to his own Church, in direct Opposition to St. Peter's Testimony, *Acts* x. 35. importing, *That in every Nation be that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him.* And what greater Instances of Zeal can be produced than Protestants have given of it, when such vast Numbers of them in several Countries, chose rather to suffer Death than assent to your additional Articles of Faith.

2dly, That * your pretended Miracles have been often disproved; and had the Case been otherwise, they are no infallible Note of a true Church, because we are cautioned in Scripture † not to expect or trust to them, especially when wrought in Confirmation of any Doctrines contrary thereunto; and § they are declared to be the Signs of Antiehrift, nor is there any Necessity for them, because those recorded in Scripture are sufficient, and no better Evidence can be desired, than we have there of the Truth of them.

3dly, Your assuming to yourselves the Title of Catholicks, is but a poor Argument of your being really so, when the very Articles of your Religion as distinguished from Protestants, are a convincing Evidence that you have no just Pretension to it; whereas a close Adherence to the Catholick Faith, as professed by the Christian Church in all Ages, must be allowed to be a much better, nay the only just

* See Bishop Stillingfleet at *supra*. † *Mark* xiii. 22. *Deut.* xiii. 3. § 2 *Thess.* ii. 9.

just Foundation to support that Claim. We therefore are the true Catholicks in Respect of Religion, and not you, as fond as you are to engross that Title to yourselves; nor can you pretend to it in any other Respect without Un-Churching all *Christendom* but yourselves: Which being manifestly the Case, your communicating with *St. Peter's* Chair, without a Conformity to the Rules of the Gospel, can no more avail you, than the Prerogatives of the *Jews* could justify their Violation of the Laws of their Religion, by their vain Traditions and the false Glosses of their Rabbies.

4thly, As to Antiquity, perpetual Visibilty, and Apostolical Succession and Mission of Pastors; I answer, that these are Properties, that equally belong to our Church; for, as was before observ'd, in all Probability it was in Being even before the Church of *Rome*, and was always the same visible Church it now is, and held the same Rule of Faith, with this only Difference, that whereas it was formerly sullied and defiled with the additional Corruptions of your Church; it is now reform'd and clear'd from them. And as to Apostolical Succession and Mission of Pastors, you are obliged before the Reformation to acknowledge them in our Church, in necessary Justification of your own; and since that Time our unquestionable Records clearly prove them.

Lastly, As to the Conversion of Infidels by the sole Ministry of your Missionaries, this is so notorious a Misrepresentation, that it is surprizing how any Body should be guilty of it, that has the least Insight either in Scrip-

ture or Ecclesiastical History: And considering the notorious Corruptions of your Doctrine and Worship, and the unwarrantable Methods made use of by your Missionaries in the two last Centuries, it will appear, they have been so far from promoting the true Interest of Christianity, that nothing has been a greater Bar or Obstacle to the Propagation of it; and therefore that you have more Reason to be ashamed, than to boast of them. For your further Conviction you may consult the fore-cited Treatises of Bishop *Stillington*, concerning the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*, and Bishop *Bull's* Vindication, &c.

To the eleventh and twelfth Exceptions of this Author against the Protestant Religion, *viz.* that the Papists even in the Judgment of Protestants themselves are on the safer Side; that we are guilty of Heresy and Schism, have no Succession of Doctrine, and no lawful Mission; and consequently no true Sacraments, Confirmation, Power of the Keys, &c. I answer, 1st, That we allow the Church of *Rome* to hold the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and therefore to be a Part of Christ's Church: But then, as she has added to these several dangerous Errors and Corruptions, by holding and enjoining some Points as necessary to Salvation, that God has no where enjoined in Holy Writ, and others that are directly contrary to his revealed Will therein contained; we can by no Means think of her but as a very unsound and corrupt Part of it, nor of her Communion but as highly dangerous to the Salvation of such as live in it; and so can never be of Opinion that the Papists are on the safer Side. And therefore when we
charitably

charitably hope that Men may be saved in that Communion, this we do with no other View, than that we cannot pretend to pronounce a peremptory Sentence on their final State, which is the Province of the Supreme Being; as not knowing what Allowances he in his infinite Mercy may make for invincible Prejudices and involuntary Mistakes some of them may labour under; though we are well assured, nay, as sure as we are, that the Scripture is the Word of God, that several Doctrines and Practices enjoined by your Church, under Pain of Damnation, are not only unwarrantable by the Holy Scriptures, (which your avowed Doctrine of Oral Tradition as a necessary Supplement to them, is a tacit Confession of) but withal clearly prohibited therein; and therefore highly dangerous and pernicious to the Salvation of such as profess them; as doubtless whatever is contrary to God's revealed Will must needs be: And such particularly is what this Author charges as a Defect in our Church, *viz.* our not seeking the Saint's Intercession; which since it cannot be done, but by Prayer or Invocation; and this is confessedly an Act of Divine Worship, must by a clear and necessary Consequence be no other than downright Idolatry. Now what a strange Method of communicating with Saints is this, that cannot be observed without sinning against God? Whereas on the other Hand, nothing of this Kind can be alledged against our Church, because therein nothing is enjoined as necessary to Salvation, but what all Christian Churches are agreed in; and accordingly is either expressly command-
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ed in Holy Writ, or may be clearly deduced from it.

Now this being the Case, I trust our judging charitably of others, whilst they condemn us, is a Conduct we need not be ashamed of, as being perfectly agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel; whereas all rash and uncharitable Censures are expressly prohibited therein.

2dly, As to the Charge of Heresy and Schism, they cannot affect us: 1st, Not the former, because we deny no one Article of Faith, that is founded upon the revealed Will of God, or was professed by the Primitive Church, or defined as such by any of the four first general Councils; much less obstinately maintain the contrary after due Means of Conviction proposed to us, which is the formal Notion of Heresy: Whereas your Church seems to be justly liable to that Charge, because though holding the Fundamentals of Christianity, she yet pertinaciously maintains Doctrines that are utterly inconsistent with them; and such particularly are the Invocation of Saints, Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, &c. the first inconsistent with that great Principle of natural and revealed Religion, the Being of a God, to whom alone all Acts of Divine Worship are due; the second, with our Saviour's Session at the right Hand of God; the third, with that one, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, that he offer'd on the Cross as a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, which the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* proves, was not to be repeated as the Sacrifices under the Law were, Ch. 9. v. 26. 10. 12. and 14.

2dly,

2dly, Not the latter, because, besides that one particular Church cannot be properly charged with Schism for separating from the Communion of another, that had no just Authority over it, as has often been proved to be the Case of the Church of *Rome* in Reference to the *British* Church; we have been obliged to separate from her Communion by the sinful Terms therein enjoin'd, and therefore the Schism must lie at her own Door. And this Charge of Schism may on another Account, be justly retorted on the Papists of this Kingdom, since they separate from a Church, whose essential Doctrines, Worship and Ministry are exactly modell'd according to the Rule of God's revealed Will, and wherein nothing is required from them as Lay Communicants, but the bare Profession of the common Rules of Christianity, which both they and we are agreed in.

3dly, The Succession of our Doctrine or necessary Articles of Faith appears from the * ancient Creeds, universally received and approved of in all Ages, and the Decrees of Councils allow'd on all Hands to be General and Oecumenical: Whereas no Traces of your distinguishing Articles of Faith are to be found therein, though requir'd to be believed, as was before observ'd, under Pain of Damnation. Now if these are true and necessary Articles of Faith, it follows, since they are not contained in any of these Creeds, nor decreed by any of these Councils, that the whole Christian Church for several Ages, failed in Points necessary to be believ'd in order to Salvation, and

* See Dr. Hicks's Coll. of Tracts against the Papists, Vol. I.

and consequently was in a State of Damnation, which is an Assertion too shocking to be maintained. And as this manifest Absurdity is unavoidable upon that Supposition, it must be allowed, that they were not necessary Doctrines of the Catholick Church in these Centuries; and if so, 'tis unconceivable how they should ever since prove such, since no human Authority can pretend to the Power of prescribing New Articles of Faith.

Lastly, As to our Mission, 'tis evident there is no essential Requisite wanting in it that can render it invalid, either with Respect to the Ordainers, who are * Bishops duly and regularly commission'd; or the Form of Ordination objected against, which is Scriptural, and † was formerly us'd in your own Church; as it still continues to be in the *Greek Church*, and that of the *Maronites of Mount Libanus*, whose Ordinations you allow of; or, *lastly*, With respect to the Persons to be ordain'd, who are previously examin'd as to their Qualifications; so that no Objection can lie against it, which you own (that depends upon the Intention of the Ordainer) is not far more liable to. And accordingly the Legality of it is allow'd by several eminent Men of the *Romish* Communion, and cannot be question'd by any of them without condemning that of of their own Church, since the *English* confessedly derive it from her, nor was it ever denied before their Conversion; and therefore those that deny it, are obliged to have recourse to that groundless and malicious Story of the *Nag's*.

* See Mr. Mason of the Ministry of the Church of England.

† See Morinus of the Orders of the Church.

Nag's-Head Ordination, which has been so often from the original Record undeniably disproved.

Now as this Charge is thus precariously founded, the Consequences drawn from it must of Course fall to the Ground.

13. I come now to the last or thirteenth Article of Complaint exhibited by this Author against the Protestant Religion, *viz.* that it can afford us no Certainty in Matters of Faith, since confessedly all particular Churches are fallible, and consequently may fall even into Errors destructive of Salvation; and we have no Grounds to found an infallible Certainty upon, either with respect to the Scripture, or our Interpretation of it: To which I reply, 1st, That it does not follow, that we have no Certainty, because we do not pretend to Infallibility in this Case; which, though arrogantly assumed by your Church in Opposition to plain and notorious Facts, as confessedly what no human Creatures are capable of by any natural Means; nor have we any satisfactory Evidence, either in Scripture or Antiquity, of any supernatural Assistance of this Kind belonging to any one Church upon Earth since the Apostolick Age: And accordingly it is unanimously disclaimed by all other Churches but your own, and not allowed to be an Article of Faith by * several of your own Writers. And since she could never yet inform the Members of her Communion where this pretended Infallibility is lodged, that they might upon Emergencies know where to have recourse to it for the Resolution of their

* See Mr. Chillingworth's *Answer to some of Rushworth's Dialogues*.

their Doubts; and as no infallible Proofs can be produced, or are so much pretended to in this Case; which yet are absolutely necessary to support that Claim for an infallible Certainty, cannot be built upon fallible Grounds; doubtless it would be a Conduct more becoming your Church to disclaim it, than to expose herself to the Scorn and Ridicule of all other Churches by so groundless a Pretension, that the very reverse of it notoriously appears to be the Truth of the Case; especially when by requiring this infallible Certainty in Matters of Faith without any Possibility of evincing it, you condemn yourselves as well as all other Christians, and make that an essential Requisite of Faith, that is no where required in the Gospel; but on the contrary seems to be clearly disproved therein by the Apostles praying for the Increase of their Faith, and those of weak and strong, of little and great Faith, often mentioned in these Sacred Writings: And accordingly no greater Degree of Assurance can be requisite in order to a true and saving Faith, than what is sufficient to determine us to perform the Conditions of the new Covenant: Now for this End there is no Necessity of its being infallible, as appears from the Instances above cited, of whose Faith and Salvation no Question can be reasonably made.

2dly, Though we disclaim this vain Pretence of Infallibility, as what no one Church of any Denomination whatsoever can be entitled to; yet I dare confidently affirm that we have a much greater Certainty for the Articles of our Faith, or far better Grounds to found them upon, than you can possibly have for those additional Articles of Faith, whereby you stand

stand distinguished from us and other Christians; because we have besides the Testimony of Scripture, the universal Suffrage and Consent of all true Churches in all Ages professing the former; which we are sure can never be made appear with respect to the latter, * as has been often acknowledged by your own Writers: To which I may safely add, that we have as great a Certainty for the Truth of our Religion, as any Matter of this Kind is capable of; for as it cannot be doubted that the Apostles received it from our Saviour, and that they preached and committed it to Writing; so we have no more Reason to question that these Sacred Writings are not sufficiently clear and evident in all the necessary Points of Religion, since otherwise they could not answer the End they were designed for, viz. our Direction in the Way to Heaven; and therefore no further Certainty can be reasonably desired of any Propositions or Articles of Faith, than we have by comparing and bringing them to the Test of this infallible Rule: The Sense of which we may be as certainly apprised of in this Case without an infallible Judge, as we may be of the Sense of any other Writings whatsoever.

3dly, That the Holy Scriptures are the genuine Remains of the inspired Authors, whose Names they bear, we have a moral Certainty, which is all that you or any Body else can have in Matters of this Kind; for we have the same Historical Evidence, and the same Catholick Tradition for it, that we have for any antient Records whatsoever; and as Co-

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pies

* See A. B. Usher's Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge p. 3. 4, &c.

pies of them have been early dispersed into the most distant Parts of the Christian World, and as they were translated into all the Languages of it; this makes it morally impossible, that they should be ever materially corrupted without a Discovery of the Fraud by the Inspection of other Copies.

As for their being corrupted by Protestants, we dare challenge the Author to produce one single Instance to support this Charge, though how justly liable his own Church is to this Imputation both with respect to Scripture and Antiquity, appears from sundry Instances that have been often produced from her *Index expurgatorius librorum prohibitorum*, &c. to retort that Charge.

Lastly, As to the Interpretation of Scripture, I need only observe, that for all your vain Boast of Infallibility, you stand upon no other Advantages in this Case, than what the Protestants enjoy in common with you, and that the notorious Errors committed by your Guides even in their Councils, which have contradicted each other, and in their most authentick Translations of Holy Writ, * as have been observed by learned Men, and confessed by your own † Popes (who are likewise remarkable for their Differences, and some of them for their Heresies) are an undeniable Evidence that they are no less fallible than other People.

Upon the Whole, since we have thus an infallible Rule to direct us, and that sufficiently clear and evident in all the necessary Points of Religion; and since no pretended infallible Judge

* See Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, and an *Essay for a New Translation of it*.

† See the *Prefaces to Pope Sixtus and Clement's Translations of it*.

Judge can be supposed able to set these in a clearer Light, than the Divine Author of it has done; doubtless it must be much safer to adhere to and be guided by it, than to pay an implicit Faith to any human Decrees or Determinations whatsoever, especially when we have clear Scripture Evidence against them, as we undeniably have in the Case in Hand. I might have animadverted upon some less material Passages in this Pamphlet in relation to our pretended Doctrine of Justification by Faith exclusive of good Works, and entire Neglect of Fasts and Festivals, and praying for the Dead, &c. but these are such palpable Misrepresentations, that I conceive the bare Mention is a sufficient Confutation of them; whence it appears what Grounds those who are proselyted to this Church of *Rome*, on account of its pretended Infallibility, have to fear their being of the Number of those miserable Persons, who are given up to a strong Delusion that they might believe a Lye, as we read, *2 Thess. iii. 11.* and I pray, God avert the Judgment from them, which is denounced in the following Verse.





A
LETTER
TO A
PROSELYTE
OF THE
CHURCH OF ROME,

Touching the Danger of Living in that

COMMUNION.

SIR,



INCE you have been seduced from the Communion of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, where all Things necessary to Salvation are taught; and nothing required as such, but what is warranted by divine Revelation; to become a Proselyte of the Church of *Rome*, where both unnecessary

unnecessary and sinful Terms of it are enjoined; as I conceive, will in some Measure appear from the Sequel of this Letter.

That you may therefore perceive, what a wretched Choice you then made, and what a dangerous Mistake you have ever since labour'd under; I thought it my Duty to do you that friendly and charitable Office of endeavouring to undeceive and set you right in this important Affair, which no less than your everlasting Interest depends upon.

Now in order to convince you of the Danger of living in that Communion, all that I think proper to be offered to your Consideration, are these two general Heads, *viz.*

First, *That * the additional Articles of Faith enjoin'd in the Church of Rome are unwarrantable Impositions, and so of no Necessity to Salvation, as having no Foundation in Scripture, nor any Catholick Tradition to support them.*

Secondly, *That several of these and other Injunctions of that Church are highly pernicious and destructive of it, as being directly contrary to God's revealed Will.*

Accordingly to prove these respectively in their Order, and to draw some proper Inferences from them, shall be the Subject of the following Lines, which if clearly made appear to be well grounded (as I trust they will) must needs give you a terrible View of your Case with respect to your eternal Salvation.

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Now

* These concern the Seven Sacraments, Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Communion in one Kind, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, the religious Use of Images and Relicks, Indulgences, the Supreme Authority of the Church and Pope of Rome, &c.

Now (First) *That the additional Articles of Faith enjoined in the Church of Rome, are unwarrantable Impositions; and so of no Necessity to Salvation, is manifest, because they have no Foundation in Scripture, nor any Catholick Tradition to support them; for they are neither commanded in any Part of Holy Writ, nor any where intimated, declared or determined therein; nor have you so much as one single Precedent in the whole New Testament to support them; nor, lastly, are there any Foot-steps or Traces of them to be found in Antiquity, at least for the three first Centuries; which as several of your Writers have own'd, so none of them could ever yet disprove, as will appear, if you consult the Books cited in the * Margin, where all the Passages of Scripture and Antiquity produced in their Favour, are proved at large to be wretchedly misapplied and perverted, and several spurious Pieces of the latter are detected. And for the further Confirmation thereof, we have this additional Evidence, that they are not contain'd in any of the antient Creeds, nor in any other Confession of Faith, before that of Pope Pius the 4th, about 170 Years since: Which strange Neglect or Omission could never be accounted for, had these been Primitive and Apostolical Doctrines; for can any Body in Reason believe, that all these several Forms and Summaries of Faith should be defective in Doctrines or Articles of it necessary to Salvation? Or that these, instead of being clearly taught by the Apostles and their*

* See the London Divines, or Dr. Bennet's *Confutation of Popery, and the Answer to the Nubes Testium.*

their Successors, should be for so many Ages concealed from the Faithful, or that there never was a compleat Rule of Faith, before that of the Council of *Trent*? And therefore, as these manifest Absurdities are otherwise unavoidable, it follows, that the *Trent* Articles are meet Innovations, which the Apostles and Primitive Christians (whose Salvation no Body can reasonably doubt of) never taught or believed.

Now if they were not then, necessary to Salvation, which the deep Silence of these holy and good Men whose Profession it was to preach the Gospel, and declare the whole Will of God to Mankind, is a plain Indication of: It is unconceivable how any human Authority could ever since render them such; for what is it to attempt this, but that heinous Sin of adding to God's revealed Will, which exposes Men to all the * *Plagues and Judgments recorded in holy Writ*? And what horrid Presumption must it be for any Man, or Number of Men to pretend to an Authority of prescribing Terms of Salvation, which is avowedly the Province of the Supreme Being? And what a flagrant Contempt is it of Divine Authority to set the Decision of fallible Men, upon the same Foot with the inspired Writings? Which yet the Church of *Rome* manifestly does, by requiring the Belief of these her *additional Articles of Faith, under Pain of Damnation*, though we have *St. Paul's* solemn and repeated Denunciation to the contrary, *Gal. i. 8. 9.*

For

For that this is evidently the Case with respect to these Articles, that they are meer human Decisions, unwarranted by the Word of God, and therefore unnecessary to Salvation, may be further made appear from the known Practice even of the Church of *Rome* itself, where all that is required in order to be entered into the Church by Baptism, and consequently to be entitled to all the Rights and Privileges of it, is only the Profession of the Apostles Creed, as appears by your own Catechism. Now if you may be admitted into the Church upon this Profession, it necessarily follows, that the same Profession is sufficient for your Continuance in it. Accordingly the *Nicene* Creed, or rather the *Constantinopolitan*, which is but a bare Explanation of that of the Apostles, is called even in the * Council of *Trent*, the Principle wherein all Christians necessarily agree, and the great and only Foundation against which *the Gates of Hell can never prevail*; and moreover is the only Baptismal Creed used in all the *Eastern* Churches to this very Day, as enjoined by two general Councils, † that of *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*, the former whereof forbids all Additions to it, under Pain of Deposition or Excommunication. And since this contains all the Articles of Belief, that were then thought necessary to Salvation throughout the whole Christian World; it is a clear and undeniable Consequence, that what has been since added to it in the *Trent* Council cannot be so; otherwise the universal Church must have failed in necessary Points of Faith, which is an Absurdity too gross to be

* See Caranza's Summa Con. Trid. p. 704.

† Can. 7.

be maintained; and withal upon that Supposition it would be sinful to dis-believe them, which nothing can be, but what is a Breach of some Command either expressed or implied in Holy Writ: Now where is there such a Command, or even a bare Precedent to be found with respect to any one of these Points? And therefore before you can make good the Charge of Heresy against us, you must prove the Necessity of these additional Articles in order to Salvation, the reverse of which (I conceive I may be allowed to say) has been already sufficiently evinced.

Whence it appears how absurd and unreasonable it is to call your Communion the *Catholic* Church, out of which none can be saved; for how can your Church in any Sense of the Word be stiled *Catholic*, that, besides its being computed to be scarce the fourth Part of the Christian World, enjoins those Doctrines as necessary Articles of Faith, that all Christians for so many Ages, even the Church of *Rome* itself, were utter Strangers to; and consequently, that it is equally absurd to call your Profession as distinguished from that of Protestants, the *Old and Catholic Religion*, since these additional Articles are so far from being really so, that they were not so much as heard of for several hundred Years in any Part of the Christian Church; nor the earliest of them are establish'd till the eighth Century, and others not till several Centuries after. Thus for Instance, the Worship of Images and Invocation of Saints were first establish'd in the second *Nicene Council*, *Ann* 787. Transubstantiation and the Pope's Supremacy in the Fourth *Lateran Council* 1215. The Communion in one kind in the Council of

of *Constance* 1415. Purgatory in the Council of *Florence* 1438, and the rest of them in that of *Trent*, which first met in the Year 1545.

Hence it likewise follows, that the Charge of Superstition and Will-Worship is justly fixed upon your Church, which requires the Belief of these Articles as necessary to Salvation, whereas you have neither Command nor Precedent in Scripture to support them.

And yet this is not the worst, or the most dangerous Part of your Case, for these Articles are not only unnecessary to Salvation, but as I proceed to prove in the second Place, several of them and other Injunctions of your Church are highly pernicious and destructive of it; for such doubtless every Thing must be allow'd to be, that is contrary to God's revealed Will.

Now to make good this Charge against your Church, out of the numerous Instances that might be produced in its Support, I shall at present only lay before you a few of the most flagrant and notorious of this Kind. And the first of these I shall now remind you of, is her prohibiting the Laity to read the Scriptures, in case they are not licensed for that Purpose, in direct Opposition to that Precept of our Saviour, * *Search the Scriptures*, and that of St. Paul, *Let the Word of God dwell in you richly*, with his solemn Charge to the *Thessal.* † *That his Epistle should be read to all the holy Brethren*; which being thus manifestly enjoined, the Fear of perverting them can be no better Plea for this Prohibition, than the Abuse of our daily Sustenance is for abstaining

* *John* v. 39. *Col.* iii. 16. † *1 Thessal.* v. 27.

staining from it. And what a horrid Contempt of the Authority, and Reflection upon the Wisdom of our Saviour and his Apostles, must it be to forbid what is thus expressly commanded by them.

The Second, is her enjoining the Use of *Images in religious Worship, and falling down before them or worshiping any Being by them*, as the *Israelites* did by the *Golden Calves*, which is expressly forbidden in the Second Commandment; for this evidently relates to the Manner, as the first does to the Object of divine Worship. And doubtless what is thus absolutely forbidden, cannot be unlawful only in a certain Respect; so that a bare relative Worship of them is prohibited, as appears from the Instance now mention'd: And accordingly we find this Practice condemn'd in the Council of *Eliberis*, and several others at *Constantinople*, *Francfort*, &c.

The third Instance of this sort is the *Communion in one kind*, which contradicts the express Words of the Institution * *Drink ye all of it*; and *St. Paul's* Injunction, that every Christian after due Examination should *eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, as is confessed by the very Council that first enjoin'd it; which clearly disproves your Pretence, that the Apostles and their Successors are the only Persons concern'd in this Part of the Institution.

For if our Saviour's Command, † *This do in Remembrance of me*, does not concern the Laity, this Absurdity will unavoidably follow, that they are not oblig'd to communicate in
either

* *Matth. xxvi. 27.*
Cave's Hist. Liter, Vol. I.

† *1 Cor. II. 24. See Dr.*

either Kind. Nor is your Plea of Concomitancy any better grounded, *viz.* that the Blood is in the Body, and therefore by receiving that, you receive both; for besides that, it does not answer the End of the Institution, which is the representing and setting forth the Death of Christ, and the Effusion of his Blood; if this was to be admitted, it would follow that the Priests are no more obliged to receive the Cup by Virtue of this Command, than the Laity.

And therefore two of your own Popes in the fifth Century, *viz.* *Leo* the first, and *Gelasius* have condemn'd this Practice as being then the peculiar Mark and Badge of the *Maricbean Hereticks*.

So groundless a Pretence is it to say, that this is an indifferent Matter; for if the Cup be not necessary, how comes our Saviour and *St. Paul* to enjoin it? If it be, how can your Church presume to dispense with a Divine Command? Especially, since if any Part of the Institution be more necessary than another, this seems to be so; forasmuch as it represents his Blood, to which Remission of Sins is in Scripture often ascribed, than to his Body: And if it be necessary as a Sacrifice, why not equally so as a Sacrament? For as it confessedly consists of two distinct Parts, so the End of it cannot be answered but by the separate Use of them, as has been already observ'd. As for those Passages in the *Acts* about *eating Bread from House to House*, &c. they are evidently to be understood by a Synecdoche (a common Figure or Form of Speech) of both eating and drinking, as *Gen. xxxi. 54. Isa. lviii. 7. Luke xiv. 1, &c.* Such

Such Instance, in the fourth Place, is *Publick Prayer* in an unknown Tongue, which the People cannot join in, (though it be the main End of all religious Assemblies) and therefore expressly condemned by *St. Paul*, *1 Cor. xiv.* as appears from the whole Scope and Tenor of that Chapter, as also forbidding the Clergy to marry, in Opposition to *St. Paul's* express Declaration, * *that Marriage is honourable in all, and the contrary the Doctrine of Devils;* and that Direction of his that *Bishops and Deacons should be the Husbands of one Wife;* and accordingly *St. Peter*, *St. Philip*, and several Bishops of the Primitive Church were married Men, and *Celibacy* was not enjoined on any of them for at least the three first Centuries. And if their being married before Ordination did not unqualify them for the Ministry; by Parity of Reason, their marrying afterwards could not do so. And therefore your Church can have no other View in this Prohibition, than to keep the Clergy more firmly attach'd to her Interest, and less dependent on the Civil Powers.

To these, in the fifth Place, let me add another Instance of this Kind, and that is *the Invocation of Saints*, in Opposition to that noted Passage of our blessed Saviour; *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, together with the first Commandment, the plain Import whereof is, that we should make God the sole Object of divine Worship: Now Prayer is confessedly an Act of divine Worship, and therefore not to be paid to any Creature without Idolatry; all Acts of this Kind paid to any other Being but God being

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* *Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 2. 22.*

equally forbidden, as the Sacrifices under the Law were; which though but relatively offered to Creatures, would doubtless have been unlawful and idolatrous; and what is no less an Instance of Idolatry, by praying to Saints at so great a Distance, as they are supposed to be from us, you ascribe to them Omniscience and Omnipresence, (which are some of the incommunicable Attributes of the Supreme Being) without which it is unconceivable, how they can possibly hear such an infinite Number of Supplicants praying to them at the same Time in so many different Places, with the Thoughts and Affection of their Hearts? For all this is requisite to make them proper Objects of Prayer and Invocation, as being without this Knowledge no more capable of it, than a blind Man is of discerning Colours, or a deaf Man of hearing Sounds.

As for that Pretence of their having it by the Glass of the Trinity, or by divine Revelation, it is no more than the meer Conjectures of fallible Men, which, as they are destitute of any Foundation either in Scripture or Antiquity, so their bare disagreeing among themselves, is a sufficient Argument to convince you, how precarious and uncertain they are. And accordingly we find this Practice virtually condemn'd in the Council of *Laodicea*.

And as *Transubstantiation* is one of the principal Articles enjoined by your Church, let me, lastly, remind you, that it is directly contrary to * several clear Passages of Holy Writ; which, as the Sense of the Words, which you found this strange Doctrine upon, cannot possibly be reconciled

* *Matt.* xxvi. 29. *1 Cor.* x. 17. xi. 26, 27, 28.

reconciled with, so it is equally impossible to collect it from them. For that Expression *This is my Body*, can denote no more than a Sign or Memorial of it, as appears not only from other parallel Passages, where the *Paschal Lamb* is called the *Passover*; and our Saviour calls himself the *Vine*, the *Door*, &c. but also from these Words immediately following, *Do this in Remembrance of me*: For a Memorial always implies the Absence of what is commemorated by it. Nor can it in any wise be understood of his real Body either in its corruptible or incorruptible State; not the former, for such it confessedly cannot be, since his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven; not the latter, for so it cannot be broken, nor be a true and proper propitiatory Sacrifice, which always consisted in the Death of the Thing sacrificed. But suppose these Words should be taken in the literal Sense, yet as this would be the manifest Import of them, that the Bread which our Saviour then spoke of, was his Body; and as nothing can be changed into what it was before; they must be utterly inconsistent with that Change of the Elements, which the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* supposes, according to the Confession of several of your own Writers.

And since to change one thing into another, (as suppose Water into Wine) is the same as to make one thing out of another, if this Doctrine was to be admitted, it would unavoidably follow, that our Saviour has a Body made out of the Substance of Bread, as well as that which he assumed of the Substance of the *Virgin Mary*. And to solve these Inconsisten-

ees by calling this a Miracle, must be equally absurd and unreasonable; for we read of no Miracles in Scripture, but what were the Objects of our Senses, whereas this contradicts most of them; though the great Foundation of the Christian Religion, our Saviour's Resurrection, has no other Evidence to support it, nor can you pretend to argue from Scripture without a Regard to it. To omit other numberless Absurdities this Doctrine is attended with, as that our Saviour held his whole Body in his Hand, was eaten by his Disciples, when he sate with them at the Table; that his Body may be lock'd up in a Box, and yet be in ten thousand Places at the same Time, be poison'd, eaten up by Rats, &c. Now since you have thus the clearest and most irrefragable Proofs to convince you, how false and erroneous this great Principle of your Church is, what a flagrant Instance of Idolatry must it be to worship the Host in pursuance of it.

These and sundry other Instances of this Kind, which might and have been often produced in Proof of this Head; as * *the Sacrifice of the Mass* † *Purgatory*, § *the Adoration of the Host*, &c. that are evidently contradictory to Scripture, clearly disprove that groundless Pretence of your Church's Infallibility which you are so much divided about the proper Seat of; for how can that Church be infallible, that has thus actually and dangerously erred? For such Errors undoubtedly must all those Doctrines be, that are inconsistent with the great Rule and

* *Heb. ix. 26. x. 12.* † *Rom. viii. 1.* § *Rev. xiv. 13.* *Acts iii. 21.*

and Standard of our Duty, the revealed Will of God. And this, by the by, is a plain Indication how dangerous it is to pay an implicit Faith to any human Decrees or Determinations whatsoever, especially when we have clear Scripture Evidence against them.

Now since it thus appears, that we cannot communicate with the Church of *Rome*, without acting against God's revealed Will, it evidently follows, that it can be no Schism in us to separate from her, but the Guilt of it must lie at her own Door, that enjoins these sinful Terms of Communion.

On the other Hand, since you are not required as a Lay-Communicant in our Church, to declare yourself on any of the controverted Points, but only to profess the common Rules of Christianity, which both we and you are agreed in; it's plain you may lawfully join in Communion with us (though you cannot with your own Church, for the Reasons above-mentioned) and consequently you are in Duty oblig'd to it, upon a double Account, both as you would not live in a Communion, that you can't lawfully join with, and would avoid a causeless Separation from a true Church, which is the heinous Sin of Schism.

For such every Church must be allowed to be, that is establish'd upon the Belief of what we are plainly taught in Holy Writ, and wherein God is worshipped, and the Sacraments administered, as we are there directed; and * whose Ministers are duly and regularly commissioned, which is manifestly the Case of ours: And accordingly it is notorious, that it

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has

* See P. Fr. & Courayer's *Defence of it*.

has been the common Practice of Persons of your Communion to repair to our Churches, and join in our Liturgy, during the first ten Years of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, which two of your Popes successively offer'd to confirm, provided she would but acknowledge their Supreme Authority; so that you will have still nothing to alledge against it, but that groundless Pretence of the Pope's Supremacy, that has no Foundation in Scripture, and was condemn'd, as by the *Asiatick, African, and Greek Churches*, so * by several General Councils, and by the greatest Part of the Christian World in all Ages: Nay, even by one of your own Popes, *viz. Gregory the First*, in the Case of *John Patriarch of Constantinople's* assuming the Title of *Oecumenical or Universal Bishop*, as has been undeniably prov'd, not only by *Dr. Barrow* and other Protestant Writers, but by several of the most learned and eminent of your own Communion, as *Du Pin, Launoy, &c.*

And should you not in all Reason take the safest Side for the promoting so vast a Concern as your everlasting Salvation? Now is it not incomparably safer to live in a sound, orthodox and primitive Church, that requires nothing of you as necessary to Salvation, but what is warranted by the Word of God, than to be of a Church miserably marred and corrupted with dangerous Errors and Innovations?

To instance in some one of them; is it not much safer to worship God, who is a Spirit, according to his express Command, without Images or corporal Representations? To pray
to

* See 1 Nicene Can. 6. 1 Constan. Can. 3. Calcedon. Can. 28.

to him in a known Tongue, which is the only Way of praying with the Understanding ? To invoke him only, and not Saints and Angels, who as they are Creatures, are incapable of hearing our Petitions, and knowing the Thoughts and Intentions of our Hearts ? To forbear the Adoration of the Host, which at the best you cannot do, without running a manifest Risk of being guilty of Idolatry ? And to receive the Communion in both Kinds, or a compleat Sacrament rather than one half of it ?

In a Word, is it not much safer to believe the Holy Scripture as our infallible Rule, than the Infallibility of your Church, which has been proved to have notoriously erred ? And our three Creeds, which are founded upon divine Revelations, rather than the additional Articles of that of Pope *Pius*, which thus evidently appear to be not only unwarranted by the Word of God, but several of them directly contrary to it.

Upon the Whole, since God's revealed Will is the great Rule and Standard, whereby we are to live here, and to be for ever acquitted or condemned hereafter ; it must highly concern us all to endeavour both to believe and act in Conformity to it, which how utterly inconsistent it is with what is required of you in the Church of *Rome*, has been in some Measure already proved ; and therefore I shall only add, that I am,

S I R,

Yours Affectionately,

GR. JONES.

* * * * *

The Bishop of LONDON's Circular Letter to the Clergy of his Diocese.

Good Brother,

Dec. 17. 1734.



Believe it is not unknown to you, that at this Time there is an uncommon Diligence among the Priests of the Church of Rome, in making Converts to Popery. And though the Numbers they have seduced in these two great Cities may not be altogether so large as some have represented; yet it is certain, that the Converts they make are observed by many serious and well-disposed People, to be much more numerous than in former Times. And this is a Warning to every one who has the Care of Souls committed to him, to use the like Diligence in watching those who lay in wait to deceive, and to spare no Pains in hindring his People from falling into the Snare; that is, from being perverted to a Religion, which has so grossly corrupted the true Faith and Doctrine of Christ, and introduced so much Superstition and Idolatry into the Christian Worship.

This is a Duty incumbent upon all who are Pastors in a *Protestant Church*; and not only so, but Subjects to a *Protestant Government*; the supporting of which is the only Means,
under

under God, of perpetuating to us the free and quiet Enjoyment of our own Religion. And it must be remembred, that every Convert to Popery, at the same Time that he becomes a Zealot for the Church of *Rome*, becomes also a Zealot for a Popish Pretender to the Throne.

Upon both these Accounts, let me beseech you to have a watchful Eye over your Flock, and especially over such of them as you think more liable than others, to be attack'd by *Romish* Priests, and in Danger to be seduced by them; that you may prevent those Attempts, or at least the Success of them, by learning what are the Arguments in Favour of the Church of *Rome*, which make the greatest Impression upon their Minds, and by furnishing them with proper Antidotes against them.

And besides your private Endeavours, it will be very necessary at this Time, that in your publick Discourses from the Pulpit, you take all proper Occasions to possess your People in general, with a just Sense of the many gross and dangerous Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and of the Agreement of the contrary Tenets of this *Protestant Church*, with the Doctrine of the Gospel.

Thus, commending you to the Blessing and Direction of God, and praying that this and all your other Pastoral Labours may be attended with Success, I remain,

Sir,

Your assured Friend and Brother,

Edm' London'

F I N I S.

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